RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 7th May, 1986/17 Vaisakha, 1908 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the Clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

International airports during the Seventh Five Year Plan period

*201. SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO:†

SHRI KALPNATH RAI:

Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) what are the airports likely to be commissioned as international airports during the Seventh Five Year Plan period and the expected dates of their commissioning; and

(b) whether Srinagar airport is likely to be included in the list and accorded top priority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) During the Seventh Five Year Plan, no provision has been made for the conversion of any domestic airport into international airport.

(b) No, Sir.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: Sir, the people of Jammu and Kashmir will be shocked to hear when they will know from the newspapers that there is no provision for converting Srinagar into an international airport either now or even in the Seventh Five-Year Plan. The shock is also personal to me because I treat the Minister as my younger brother I have always been treating him like that, and I find that he is a dynamic Civil Aviation Minister we have had. But inspite of that, he has given me this shock. I do not know what the reasons are that weighed with the Government for not converting Srinagar into an international airport.

My supplementary is that if it is not possible to make it an international airport immediately, then, there are only two other alternatives. One is, during Smt. Indira Gandhi's time a decision had been taken and announced that there would be three airports where facilities would be provided for direct chartered flights to operate. These were Trivandrum, Goa and Srinagar. The two other airports have already been provided with these facilities. When will Srinagar be provided wih these facilities.

In this connection, Sir, I would like to say what difference a chartered aircraft makes to a tourist. The direct Delhi-Jeddah-London normal fare is Rs. 18,790, and the excursion fare offered by all the airlines on the same route is Rs. 10,860. And if the same aircraft is run on a chartered basis, the fare is only Rs. 8,500. So, it makes all the difference for tourists to pay only Rs. 8,500 instead of Rs 18,800.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can ask the second supplementary.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: I would like to ask the Minister , when would these facilities of operating chartered air-flights to Srinagar be made available as has been decided by Mrs. Indira Gandhi. And (b)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. You will have second supplementary. Please sit down. I am going to allow you second supplementary. Mr. Minister, after so many encomiums....

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: It is difficult for me to disappoint him But the truth is that under the International Airport Authority Act, 1971 only four airports in the country have been declared as international airports. Now it is not necessary to declare any other airport in the country as an international airport. But wherever it is necessary we can have international flights.

About the second part of the question, I do not think it is right that Government had even declared that Hyderabad, Trivandrum and Srinagar would have international flights. Sir, the Air India had

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Ghulam Rasool Matto.

done a survey, and it came to the conclusion that it was not possible to have a direct flight, international flight to Srinagar. There are other reasons which I do not want to say here.

Let him ask second supplementary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: This has been announced, and I will furnish to the Minister the assurances given by Shrimati Indira Gandhi about Srinagar.

In any case, my second supplementary is this. At present bookings are being done from international points, under which Bombay and Delhi are included in the same fare. Any tourist can go to Bombay and then to Delhi or first to Delhi and then to Bombay without paying any extra fare. The International Airlines had this agreement with the Indian Airlines.

Will Srinagar also be included along with Delhi and Bombay so that the tourists do not have to pay any extra fare for going to Srinagar. This is the least that the Government can do to attract international tourists to Kashmir. Will the hon. Minister agree to extend this facility to Srinagar?

Part (b) of my question is will the Government provide extra air bus flights to Srinagar from Delhi to meet the requirements of the international tourist traffic in addition to the small number of international flights operating now.

Part (c) of my question is whether the Government is interested in improving the international tourist traffic by air to Kashmir? If so, what are the steps the Government proposes to take?

MR. CHAIRMAN: After putting two questions, if you want to frame questions in parts (a), (b) and (c), that comes to six questions.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Referring to the first part of the hon. Member's question, I may point out that Bombay and Delhi are both gateway points at which Air India operates. However, So far as Srinagar is concerned, there is a domestic sector involved and the Indian Airlines have to be paid fare of this sector. That is why we cannot do the same thing as we are doing for Bombay and Delhi. There are so many questions that I do not know exactly which is his second part. We have taken quite a number of steps to see that Srinagar people do not suffer because of Indian Airlines not being able to provide extra flights. I have got the whole details of the flights and airbus service which show that we have taken steps. If you like I can read them out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have not answered one point of his question. Will you introduce airbus service to Srinagar?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I have done that, Sir.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: No. I will draw the Minister's attention to this fact that in 1980, 1981, 1982 and 1983 in the...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under what rule are you speaking?

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: ...tourist season...

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no supplementary now.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: .. three additional airbus were operating from Delhi to Srinagar, but now there is no such bus. There is only one Boeing service from Bombay and Ahmedabad and one Boeing twice a week to Jammu. That will not make any difference. There is no additional flight from Delhi to Srinagar. That is why we are suffering.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I think the hon. Member is not adequately informed. I would like him to listen to this. I have a daily airbus service from Delhi to Srinagar IC427.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: That is there.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Now, I have also five days a week Boeing Delhi-Amritsar-Srinagar; I have two days a week Boeing Delhi-Amritsar-Jammu-Srinagar; I have five days a week Boeing Delhi-Chandigarh-Jammu-Srinagar, I have one weekly Boeing Delhi-Jammu-Srinagar; I have five days a week boeing Jammu-Srinagar-Jammu; I have two-days a week Boeing Bombay-Ahmedabad-Srinagar.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: But there is nothing from Delhi to Srinagar.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Not only this, Sir, a shuttle between Jammu and Srinagar is also provided five days a week by boeing. New links from Bombay-Ahmedabad have been provided to Srinagar two days a week by Boeing 737. The Indian Airlines has also provided the same day link from Madras-Hyderabad to Srinagar. What more does he want, Sir?

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: The Minister is not fair. He has not kept his promise. In the prelude he said he will not be disappointing Mr. Matto. He has ended by doing so.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: No, I have given him so many things.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister does not think so.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: Would the hon. Minister kindly tell us that in the Seventh Five-Year Plan we have got only four international airports, but only Delhi Airport has been modernised. Does he have plans to modernise the other three airports to bring them up to a higher international standard. The hon. Minister has said that he has started additional facilities at points where bookings are being made say at Goa and at Hyderabad. I would like to know whether he is going to make available these additional facilities at the airports from which direct international flights are permitted.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Yes, Sir. We are going to have a new international airport at Madras. The third modular Indira Gandhi International Airport also is going to be there in the Sahar in Bombay.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: I have read a news item today that there is a lot of delay and confusion in Delhi International Airport regarding the lifting of air cargoes. What are the reasons for this delay and confusion? May I know from the Minister whether his Ministry has drawn up any perspective plan? Sir, in the next few years air traffic will definitely increase. Ours is a big country with a huge population. In view of this, whether he is considering proposals to start international airports in other areas too, particularly Bangalore? May I also know from the Minister whether Bangalore can be thought of immediately for the purpose of having international flights?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Regarding the hon. Member's first part of his question there was an article in the press about confusion on the cargo. But on a personal visit I found there was a littler misunderstanding. I would not call it a confusion because this is a new cargo which is computerised. The people were not familiar with this system. When I say people, it is not people who are operating the system. But people who brought their own cargo they were not familiar with this system.

As regards his second part of the question, I have already answered that we cannot declare any airport as international airport in the country. But where it is possible we can run international flights as we have done in Goa, Trivandrum and Hyderabad. No doubt, Sir, Bangalore has also been thought of in the near future. As soon as a proper study is made and when we come to know that it is feasible to run international flights from Bangalore, we will consider this.

SHRI VITHALBHAI MOTIRAM PATEL: Sometime back the Minister has said that a Working Group has been set up to recommend for the development of airports to international airports. May I

know from the Minister whether the Working Group had submitted its report in the case of Ahmedabad airport also to be developed as an international airport?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: No doubt, Sir, the Working Group has submitted its report. They have said that the Ahmedabad airport ranks third in the potential of air traffic. At present 1,700 passengers travel every week. A very large proportion, that is, 82 per cent of the passengers move to Bombay for travelling abroad. I am already considering if we could use Ahmedabad airport as an international flight airport.

SHRI S. W. DHABE: I understand the Working Group also suggested some standby airports to obviate congestion at the international airports like Bombay, Delhi and other places. They have also suggested that Nagpur also can be used as a standby airport for flights to Bombay. May I know what is the result, Whether the Working Group recommendations have been implemented or not?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: The Working Group has said that Nagpur is not feasible.

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Sir, there was a persistent demand to declare Hyderabad airport as an international airport. When the Prime Minis- Shri Rajiv Gandhi who was also incharge of Tourism and Civil Aviation, assured us that the Hyderabad airport will be declared as an international airport. We have also raised this issue in the Consultative Committee meeting and in this House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What happened in the Consultative Committee meeting cannot be quoted here. You know the rule.

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: We have also raised this issue in this House. Instead of declaring Hyderabad airport as an international airport only one international flight No. 170 is being operated. In view of increased air traffic, whether the Minister would reconsider to declare the Hyderabad airport as an international airport? In the meantime, the Minister should consider to have some more international flights from Hyderabad.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, as I said earlier, we cannot declare any other airports as international airports in the country. But we can consider if there is feasibility for more flights and traffic is there.

श्री सुशील चन्द मोहन्ता: मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूं कि पंजाब, जम्मू काश्मीर, हरियाणा और हिमाचल प्रदेश के लोग बहुत बड़ी तादाद में बाहर के देशों में सेटेल्ड हैं, कनाडा में, यूनाइटेड स्टेट्स में, यूनाइटेड किंगडम में या योरप में और ईस्टर्न कंट्रीज में या एशियन कंट्रीज में हैं और उन का बड़ा हैवी ट्रैफिक है और उन को दिल्ली आकर फारेन फ्लाइट अवेल करनी पड़ती है। क्या इस बात का नोटिस माननीय मंत्री जी ने लिया है कि इधर के लोग जो उस एरिया के, इन चार स्टेट्स के हैं जब वे कहीं बाहर फारेन कंट्रीज में जाते हैं तो चंडीगढ़ में इंटरनेशनल एयर फ्लाइट शुरू करने से लोगों को कितनी सुविधा होगी। क्या माननीय मंत्री जी ने इस की इंक्वायरी करायी है और क्या वे इस बारे में सोच सकते हैं?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, we have not got any study done.

SHRI M. KADHARSHA: Sir, Tiruchy aerodrome is handling Indian Airlines and Air Lanka flights from Colombo for a long time. The hon. Minister said, if there is feasibility, the Government will consider. Sir, as a person from this area, I would like to inform the hon. Minister that most of the non-resident Indians in Singapore and Malaysia are from Tiruchy. These persons fly from Tiruchy to Colombo and from Colombo, they catch another international aircraft.

So, in this way, our Government is losing valuable foreign exchange. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is the difficulty in making international airports when there is traffic growth, when you can get custom revenue, when you can get airport tax?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER. Sir, we can do the study.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI: Sir, there are many domestic airports in the country from which international flights are operating. For example, Patna and Banaras, they operate to Nepal and from Tiruchy, flights go to Colombo and under the circumstances, may I know from the Minister that even if the Government does not want to include them under the International Airport Authority whether they would try to modernise these airports by instituting, strengthening, widening and shoulder-lighting the runways and also increasing the LCM by installing I.L.S. category-3? Even in Delhi, I.L.S. Category-3 is not working. It may not be known to the Minister. It is very necessary that ILS-3 category should be installed. I would like to know from the Minister whether there is a plan to do all this?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER : Yes, Sir. There is a full plan to improve all the airports.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister she has basically asked whether the Instrument Landing System is working properly and whether there is any idea of introducing this ILS in other international airports?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: YES, Sir. Instrument Landing Systems are working properly. Perhaps, they will not be able to land in the absence of this system. They are working, Sir.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI: Even in Delhi, ILS is not working.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: It is working, Sir. (*Interruptions*).

Conversion of Naupada-Gunpur Line

*202. SHRI JAGADISH JANI : Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to convert Naupada-Gunpur narrow gauge line in Orissa into broad gauge;

(b) whether this project is going to be implemented during the current financial year; and

(c) if so, what are the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA : Sir, there is a mistake in the printing. It should be 'Gunpur' and not Guntur.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: Sir, there are some mistakes in question No. 204 also. "Question No. 204 (part b) if so, what action Government have been taken in this regard".

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am told, the culprit is the Printing Press and only the printers will know. (*Interruption*).

†SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know from the Minister whether his Ministry has received any proposal from the Government of Orissa for the conversion of Naupada-Gunpur line; if so, when was the proposal received and what action has been taken thereafter?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Sir do I answer in Marathi?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. You answer in Hindi or English.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: If translation facilities are available, Sir, he can answer in Oriya.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no, he wanted to know whether he could answer in Marathi?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Sir, there was an engineering-cum-

†English translation of original supplementary put in Oriya.